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Title: Need to provide financial assistance to KBK region of Orissa.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam Chairman, I would like to raise a very important matter of urgent public importance regarding the most backward region of this country, that is, the KBK Region. The KBK Region, which is the size of the State of Kerala, is amongst the most backward regions in the country with a very high concentration of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and people below the poverty line. So, a special industrial incentive policy should be announced by the Government of India for the development of industrial infrastructure and industries in this region.

The Government of India have, time and again, in the past announced special incentive packages for the development of industries in backward regions and Special Category States. This include the North East Industrial Policy of December, 1997, the Sikkim Industrial Policy of December, 2002, the Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy of June, 2002 and Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh Industrial Policy of January, 2003.

I would request the Union Government that incentives may be provided on the lines of the North East Industrial Policy. The specific industrial incentives which we seek are 100 per cent for setting up growth centres and industrial infrastructure development centres. The infrastructure development centres set up in the KBK Region may be declared as a totally tax-free zone for at least 10 years. Capital investment subsidy amounting to 15 per cent of the investment in plant and machinery may be provided up to a ceiling of Rs. 30 lakh per unit. Then, the Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana may be relaxed in terms of upper age limit for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes up to the age of 45 years and 40 years for general category persons of that specific region instead of 35 years. In addition to that, the subsidy component amounting to 15 per cent of the project cost subject to a ceiling of Rs. 15,000 per beneficiary instead of Rs. 7,500 may be provided.

The hon. Prime Minister had visited Orissa and he was appraised about these demands during his last visit to Orissa. So, I would urge upon the Union Government to take action on these demands at the earliest.